

THE CLEVELAND  
MUSEUM OF ART  
11150 EAST  
BOULEVARD  
CLEVELAND, OHIO  
11106-1797



October 25, 1991

**THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART PRESENTS WORKS FROM ITS IMPORTANT  
COLLECTION OF ISLAMIC TEXTILES IN HONOR OF ITS 75TH ANNIVERSARY  
November 26, 1991 - Fall 1992**

The exhibition **Textiles from Egypt, Syria, and Spain: 7th through 15th Centuries** focuses on textiles produced in those nations from the beginning of the Islamic period to the fall of the last Muslim dynasty in Spain, shortly before Egypt and Syria were conquered by Ottoman Turks.

The textiles from Egypt and Syria include patterned silks, tapestries, inwoven tapestry ornaments, and printed textiles. Some are ornamental portions of garments, while a few are rare examples of textiles intended as furnishings. While many of the textiles were produced for ordinary citizens, others were made in royal factories for the exclusive use of the caliph and his court, or were produced as luxuries for export. The textiles of Egypt and Syria show the persistence of pre-Islamic designs and techniques, and concomitant development of the Egypto-Arabic style, as well as various stages in drawloom silk weaving from early examples heavily dependent on Byzantine and Persian models to later silks of the Mamluk style. Because of Egypt's and Syria's extensive commercial ties and shifting political alliances, their textiles combine indigenous elements with those of Byzantium, Persia, China, and India.

Spain attained its greatest achievements in textile production during the Islamic period. Displayed in the exhibition is a 10th-century embroidery which is the earliest Spanish *tiraz* so far known, and part of a rare inwoven-tapestry hanging of the 13th century. Spanish silk weaving is represented by examples dating from the 12th and 15th centuries. These document the close ties Spain maintained with Byzantium and the Near East through the 12th century, the shift to small-scale geometric designs during the 13th century, the special class of Mudejar textiles that also emerged during the 13th century as Muslim territories increasingly fell to the Christians, and finally the beautiful "Alhambra style" silks of the last Muslim dynasty, the Nasrids. The exhibition was organized by Anne E. Wardwell, curator of textiles.

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Seventy-fifth  
Anniversary

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